

2014 TEEA Winner Education Category: Oceans Program at Flour Bluff Intermediate, Corpus Christi

Cliff Strain, Science Teacher

This is my 24th year teaching. And the place that we are going today is 57 acres of wetlands that was a gift to the school.

First who can demonstrate how to properly sit in a kayak?

I get a new batch of fifth graders every six weeks.

And watch how the paddle hits the water.

I teach them how to kayak.

Hey are you guys listening?

How to collect specimens and just give them a basic idea of how to identify something.

When the sheepshead minnows get really big look at how orange their fins get.

And learn a little bit about all the relationships in our local environment. We call it Oceans.

Vallissa Frieze, Student

We learn a little bit about the native species and invasive species.

Cliff Strain

A lot of these kids go to the beach, have parents that fish, that take them fishing, so it's information that they can use everyday.

Ruben Barboza, Student

How he teaches things, he teaches it very clearly.

Vallissa Frieze

He explains everything like how we would see it.

Cliff Strain

And if you drew out the water molecule, it looks like who? Mickey Mouse. It looks like Mickey Mouse. I call it the Disney molecule.

Vallissa Frieze

It's kind of funny but important at the same time.

Salvador Alvarado, Ph.D., Principal, Flour Bluff Intermediate School

The Oceans Program is probably the most popular class that we have here at the intermediate campus. They relay that back to the parents, they'll do beach clean ups, they'll have different types of activities.

Alyssa Kennett, Student

Whenever I used to pass water, I would just stare at it because I thought it was well pretty, shiny, but now I understand that there are animals living there that need that water to survive.

Vallissa Frieze

I've learned that not just marine animals live around the ocean, like deer live out here, and rattlesnakes. I haven't seen any rattlesnakes out here, but there are some.

Salvador Alvarado, Ph.D.,

He truly has a passion for what he does. It's obvious.

Cliff Strain

Watching the kids have fun and you know, enjoying their smiling faces, yeah, I get a lot of satisfaction.